

# Rare Mammal Observations 2005

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## **Abstract**

Reports were received for 10 observations of 10 martens, 5 observations of 5 wolverines, 10 observations of 10 lynx, 75 observations of 76 cougars, and 34 observations of 43 moose. A lynx specimen found in the state was apparently a lynx-bobcat hybrid. Two moose in northeast Wisconsin were seen in several locations.

## **Methods**

Observations were collected of rare mammals including timber wolf (*Canis lupus*), American marten (*Martes americana*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), cougar (*Puma concolor*), and moose (*Alces alces*). These observations were collected from agency field personnel or members of the general public in 2005. Observations of rare mammals were reported on a "Rare Mammal Observation Card" (Figure 1) which was sent to the DNR office in Park Falls or on the WDNR endangered mammal website (<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/forms/raremammal.asp>).

All observations were classified as "probable", "possible", or "not likely". These classifications were made by the authors based on levels of documentations presented by the observer or presence of additional evidence, or these were classified by field biologists submitting the reports based on their assessments of the evidence. Only "probable" and "possible" observations are reported here. Moose were usually listed as probable, because they were relatively easy to accurately identify. Animals were classified as adults if they appeared to be  $\geq 1$  year old, but among carnivores, could include younger animals because adult size was achieved by 6 to 9 months. Animals less than 1 year old were called juveniles, and this included moose calves.

This report does not include tracks of Rare Mammals found on Winter Track Counts, which are reported in the August issue of Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys (Dhuey 2005). Wolf observations are not included in this report, and are also published in the August issue of Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys (Wydeven and Wiedenhoef 2005).

## **Results & Discussion**

Reports were received of 10 American martens from five different counties (Table 1). Most marten reports were from near or close to the main marten range in Wisconsin, but two were from less typical areas for martens (Figure 2). These last two observations were in Polk and Marathon County and probably represented long-distance dispersals or misidentifications.

Five reports were received of possible wolverines across five counties (Table 2, Figure 2). We believe these reports are more likely misidentifications or possible escape of captive-raised animal. In 2001 a wolverine escaped captivity and roamed through southern Wisconsin.

Ten reports were received of possible lynx observations from eight counties (Table 3). All lynx were reported from northern counties, with a Marathon County observation as the most southern report (Figure 3). A lynx was found dead in Polk County on March 11, 2006, but apparently was a lynx-bobcat hybrid. Three lynx-bobcat hybrids were previously verified in

Minnesota (Schwartz et al. 2004). The Polk County specimen represented the first lynx specimen found dead in the state since 1992 (Wydeven 1993). The possibility of hybridization between the two species further complicates our attempts to verify observations and determine presence of lynx in the state.

Three reports of cougars in Wisconsin were listed as “probable” observations, including two reports in Langlade County and one in Marinette County (Table 4). The reports in Langlade were probably of the same animal. These “probable” observations are more likely cougar than some of the other observations, but they still could represent misidentifications.

Seventy-five observations were received of 76 cougars classified as probable or possible in 38 counties (Table 5). These reports mostly represent observations that suggest the possibility of cougar, without any solid evidence to dismiss the possibility. Cougar reports were more concentrated in northern Wisconsin, but occurred throughout the state (Figure 3). Highest reports rates of cougars were from the following counties: Marinette (10), Oconto (10), Lincoln (6), and Sawyer Counties (4). Despite all these cougar observation, it was not possible to verify the presence of any wild free-roaming cougars in Wisconsin in 2005.

Thirty-four observations were received of 43 moose across 13 Wisconsin Counties (Table 6, Figure 4). Several observations were of the same animals. Two moose that were described as young bull and young cow or yearling moose, were reported from west Florence County, Forest County, northwest Langlade County, southeast Lincoln County, and last detected in north central Marathon County from May 22 through June 1. On October 17, two moose (cow & bull) were detected near Elcho in Langlade County, and perhaps represent these 2 animals again. Thus potentially 17 moose observed represented just these 2 animals. Two cases of possible calf productions were detected. Highest moose observation rates were for Forest (9), Langlade (6), and Sawyer (4) Counties. Number of moose observations was more than twice as many as the 15 observations detected in 2004 (Wiedenhoeft and Wydeven 2005).

An adult female moose, 5155F was monitored by radio telemetry in the northern portions of the Nicolet National Forest near Alvin. She remained in an area southeast of Alvin year-round, but due to funding limitations was not monitored on a regular basis. Three of the reports of moose observations were probably of moose 5155F.

### **Literature Cited**

- Dhuey, B. 2005. Winter Track Counts, 1977-2005. Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys, August 2005. 15 (5):111-115.
- Schwartz, M. K., K. L. Pilgrim, K. S. McKelvey, E. L. Lindquist, J. J. Claar, S. Loch, and L. F. Ruggiero. 2004. Hybridization between Canada lynx and bobcat: genetic results and management implications. *Conservation Genetic* 5: 349-355.
- Wiedenhoeft, J. E., and A. P. Wydeven. 2005. Rare mammal observations 2004. Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys. April 2005, 15 (2): 94-101.
- Wydeven, A. P. 1993. Rare mammal observations 1992. Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys. April 1993, 57-62.
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**Figure 1.** *Rare mammal observation card.*

<b>Rare Mammal Observation Card</b>	
(Use for Timber Wolf, Cougar, Lynx, Moose & Marten)	
<b><u>Observer:</u></b>	<b><u>Description of Animal:</u></b>
Name_____	Estimated Size_____
Address_____	Tail Length (stub, 1/4 body, 1/2 body, long as body):_____
Phone( )_____	Track Size: Length_____Width_____
Observers Background:_____	Coloration_____
No. & Species_____	Other Descriptions_____
Sex_____Adult_____Young_____	Photo Taken_____
<b><u>Location:</u></b> GPS_____ / _____	General Comments_____
Sec_____Twn_____Range_____	_____
County_____	_____
Road & Nearest Town_____	_____
Habitat_____	Reviewed by_____
Date & Time_____	Agency_____Phone( )_____
	Code: PB PS NL

**Table 1.** *Reported possible and probable observations of American marten in Wisconsin in 2005.*

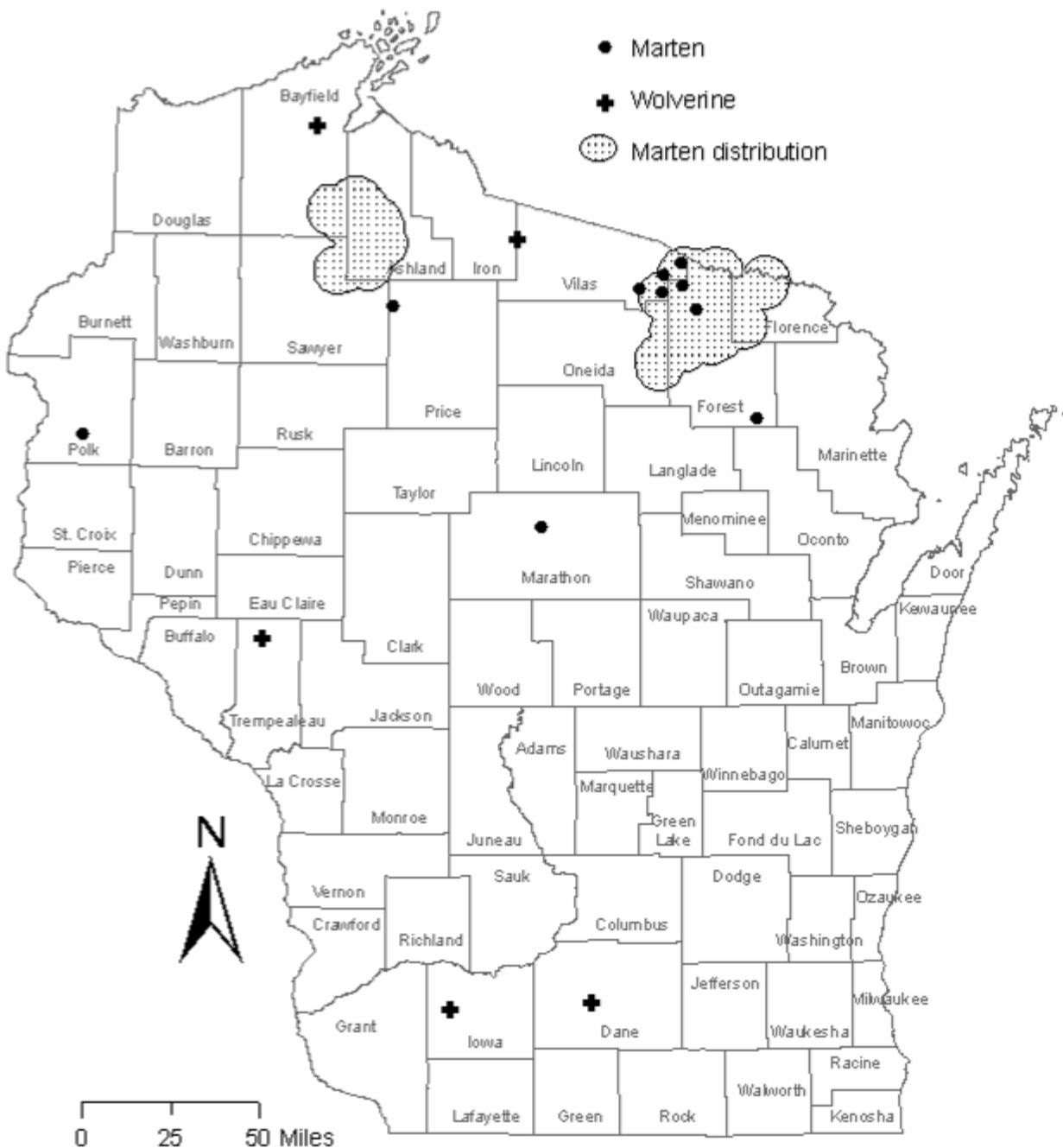
Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency <sup>1</sup>
01/25	1U	-	20	34N	16E	Forest	Soperton	Private
04/05	1A	-	11	40N	12E	Forest	Alvin	USFS
07/29	1U	-	?	29N	6E	Marathon	Marathon City	Private
10/19	1U	-	25	41N	11E	Vilas	Eagle River	DNR
11/06	1A	-	23	33N	17W	Polk	Amery	Private
11/08	1A	-	8	39N	2W	Price	Fifield	Private
11/12	1U	-	16	39N	13E	Forest	Alvin	DNR
11/19	1U	-	14?	40N	10E	Vilas	Eagle River	Private
11/21	1A	-	23	40N	11E	Vilas	Eagle River	Natur.Res.
11/25	1A	-	11	41N	12E	Vilas	Phelps	Natur.Res.

<sup>1</sup>Agency for whom observer works

**Table 2.** *Reported possible and probable observations of wolverine in Wisconsin in 2005.*

Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency <sup>1</sup>
06/09	1A	-	32	24N	8W	Trempeleau	Strum	Private
07/17	1A	-	6?	42N	5E	Vilas	Manitowish Waters	Private
08/01	1A	-	35	7N	8E	Dane	Madison	Private
10/23	1A	-	7	6N	2E	Iowa	Cobb	Private
10/30	1A	-	27	48N	6W	Bayfield	Moquah	Private

<sup>1</sup>Agency for whom observer works



**Figure 2.** *Reported possible and probable marten and wolverine observations in Wisconsin during 2005.*

\*Marten distribution from: Woodford, Jim. 2005. Summary Report State Wildlife Grants Program - Inventory, Status, and Management Needs of American Marten in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources. Rhinelander, WI. 10 pp.

**Table 3.** *Reported possible and probable observations of lynx in Wisconsin in 2005.*

Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency <sup>1</sup>
02/12	-	1	36	42N	11E	Vilas	Lac Vieux Desert	DNR
03/11	1A	-	25	34N	16W	Polk	Amery	DNR <sup>2</sup>
03/15	-	1	22?	44N	4W	Ashland	Clam Lake	GLIFWC
05/20	1A?	-	17	39N	11E	Oneida	Three Lakes	Private
05/22	1U	-	11	38N	11E	Oneida	Three Lakes	Private
08/17	1A	-	1?	38N?	16E?	Florence	Fence	Private
09/25	1U	-	35?	28N	9E	Marathon	Hatley	Private
10/13	1A	-	25	51N	6W	Bayfield	Cornucopia	Private
11/05	1A	-	20	44N	9W	Bayfield	Drummond	Private
11/15	1U	-	34?	36N	5W	Rusk	Tony	Private

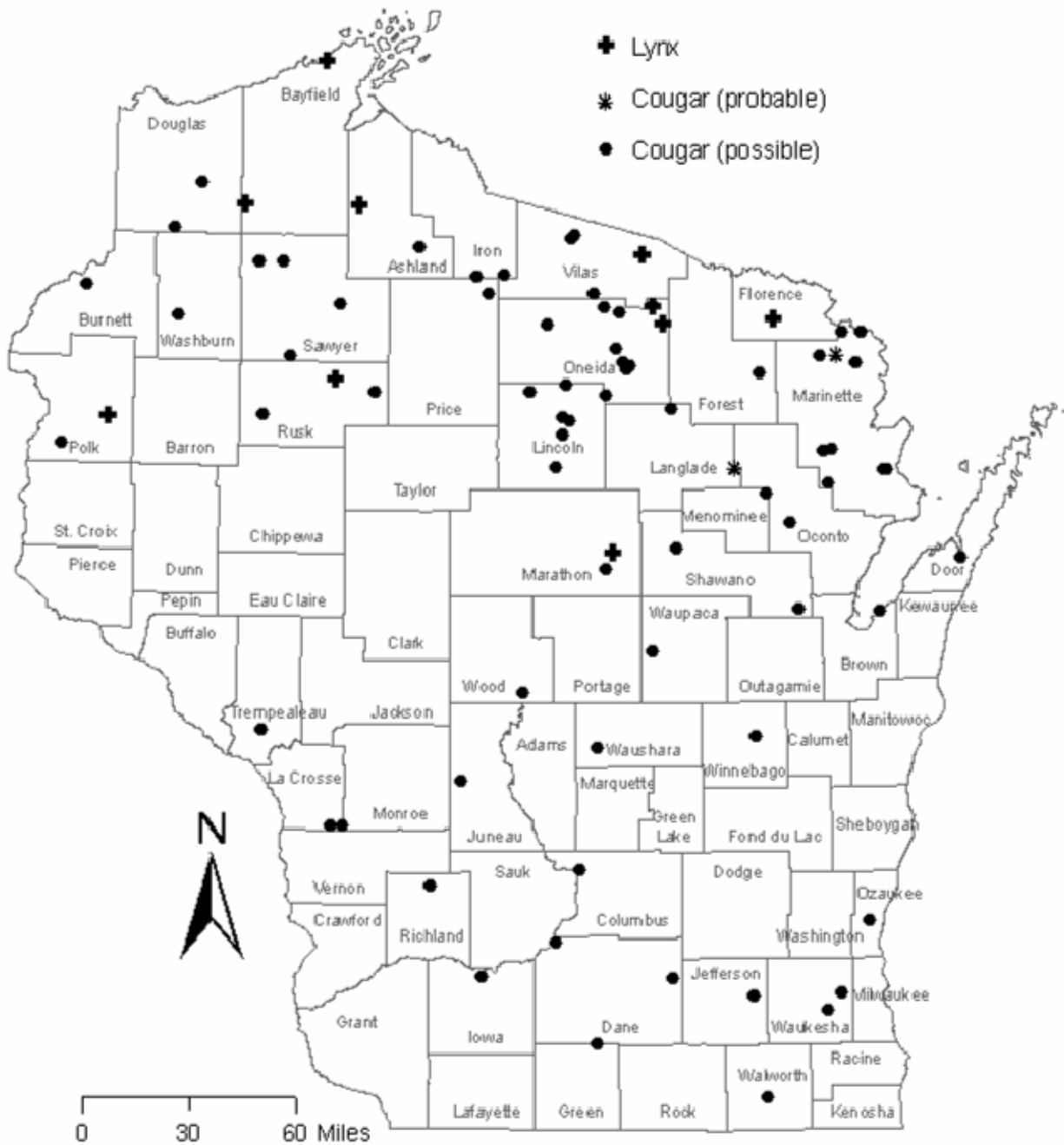
<sup>1</sup>Agency for whom observer works<sup>2</sup>Found dead, apparent lynx-bobcat hybrid**Table 4.** *Reported probable visual observations of cougars in Wisconsin in 2005.*

Date	Number sighted	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Color	Agency <sup>1</sup>
05/24	1UA?	6	31N	15E	Langlade	Langlade	Lt. Brown	Private
06/14	1UA?	6	31N	15E	Langlade	Langlade	Lt. Brown	Private
08/18	1M?A	25	37N	19E	Marinette	Dunbar	Tan	Private

<sup>1</sup>Agency for whom observer works

**Table 5.** *Reported probable and possible observations of cougars in Wisconsin in 2005, by quarter.*

<b>County</b>	<b>Jan-Mar</b>	<b>Apr-Jun</b>	<b>Jul-Sep</b>	<b>Oct-Dec</b>	<b>Total</b>
Ashland				1	1
Brown				1	1
Burnett		1			1
Columbia		1			1
Dane	2				2
Door				1	1
Douglas			2		2
Florence		1			1
Green				1	1
Iowa	1				1
Iron				2	2
Jackson				1	1
Jefferson		1			1
Juneau				1	1
LaCrosse			2		2
Langlade	1	2			3
Lincoln	1	1	4		6
Marathon			1		1
Marinette	2	2	2	4	10
Menominee				1	1
Oconto				1	1
Oneida	1	3	6		10
Ozaukee		1			1
Polk			1		1
Price			1		1
Richland				1	1
Rusk			1	1	2
Sawyer			2	2 (1 report of 2)	4
Shawano	1			1	2
Trempealeau			1 (tracks)		1
Vilas	1		2		3
Walworth		1 (tracks)			1
Washburn			1		1
Waukesha	1 (sign)	1			2
Waupaca			1		1
Waushara			1		1
Winnebago		1			1
Wood				1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20 (21 animals)</b>	<b>75 (76 animals)</b>



**Figure 3.** *Reported possible and probable lynx and cougar sightings in Wisconsin during 2005.*



**Table 6.** *Reported possible and probable observations of moose in Wisconsin in 2005.*

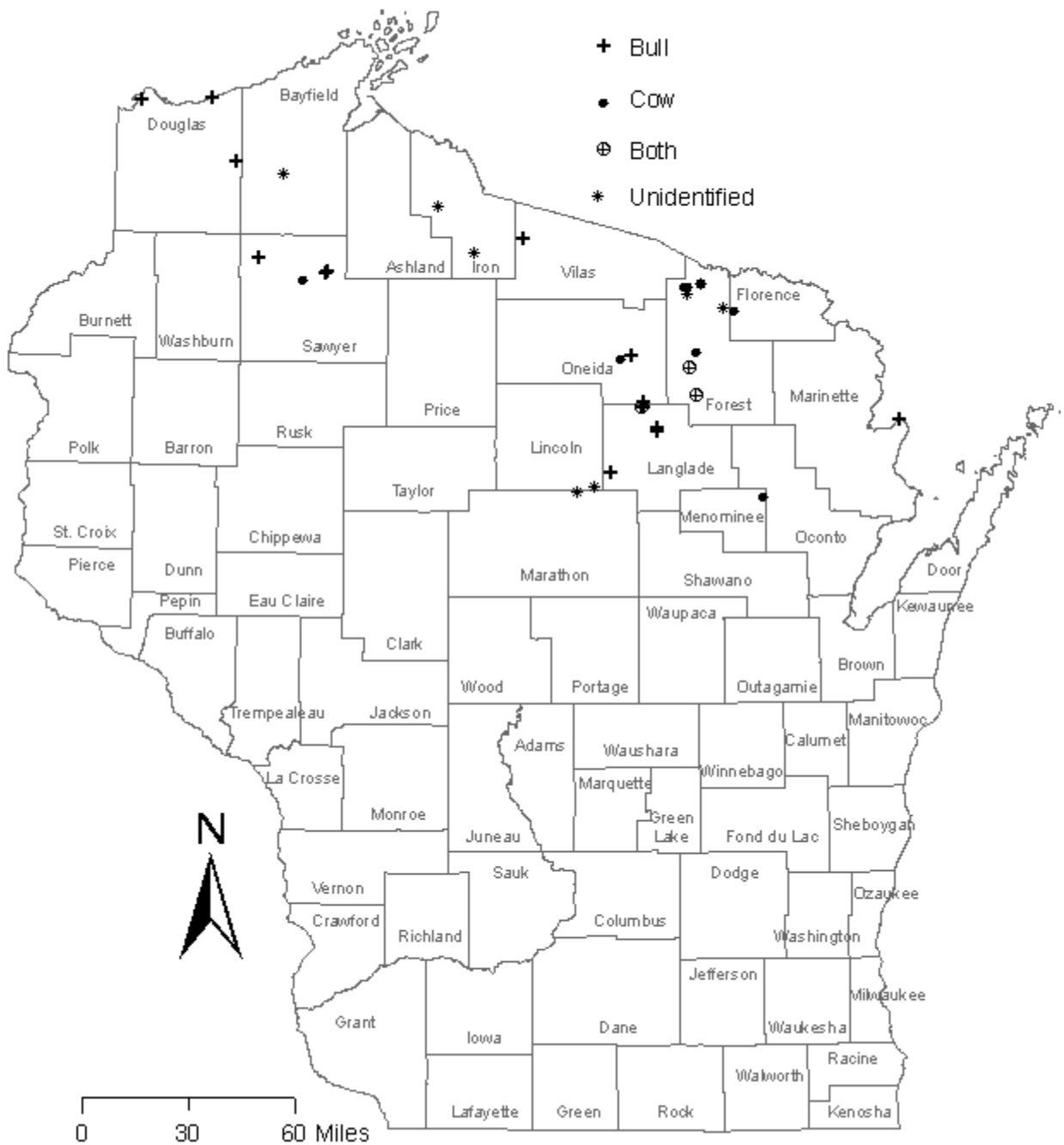
Date	Number sighted <sup>1</sup>	Tracks sighted	Sex	Township	Range	Sec	County	Nearest Town
04/18	1A		U	40N	13E	11	Forest	Alvin
05/??	2A		M,F	35N	13E	?	Forest	Crandon
05/22	1A,1U		F?,U	39N	15E	20	Florence	Long Lake
05/23?	2A?		U	39N	14E	14	Forest	Long Lake
05/24	2A?		F	37N	13E	?	Forest	Argonne
05/24	1A		F	40N	13E	11	Forest	Alvin
05/25	2A		M,F	36N	13E	7	Forest	Crandon
06/01		1A?,1J?	U	31N	8E	27	Lincoln	Merrill
06/01?	2U		U	30N	8E	4?	Marathon	Merrill
06/21	1A		M	34N	22E	~25	Marinette	Koss, MI
06/25?		1A,1J	U	45N	7W	6	Bayfield	Drummond
07/03		1U	U	40N	13E	~30	Forest	Alvin
07/17	1J		M	33N	11E	3	Langlade	Summit Lake
07/18	1A		M	33N	11E	3	Langlade	Summit Lake
09/11	1U		U	30N	16E	13	Menominee	Mountain
09/14	1A		M	42N	5E	4	Vilas	Manitowish Waters
09/17		1U	U	44N	1E	21	Iron	Upton
09/20	1A		M	46N	10W	23	Douglas	Brule
09/22	1A		M	41N	9W	1	Sawyer	Hayward
09/24	1A		F?	40N	6W	6	Sawyer	New Post
09/24	1A		M	41N	5W	30	Sawyer	New Post
09/26	1A		M	41N	5W	30	Sawyer	New Post
10/01		1U	U	42N	3E	30	Iron	Mercer
10/01	1A		M	31N	9E	9	Langlade	Antigo
10/14	1A		M	33N	11E	10?	Langlade	Summit Lake
10/16	1A		F	40N	13E	18	Forest	Alvin
10/17	2A		M,F	34N	10E	12?	Langlade	Elcho
10/17	1A		M	34N	10E	1	Langlade	Summit Lake
10/17	1A		M	35N	10E	36	Oneida	Pelican Lake

**Table 6.** *Continued.*

Date	Number sighted <sup>1</sup>	Tracks sighted	Sex	Township	Range	Sec	County	Nearest Town
10/18	1A		M	37N	10E	28	Oneida	Rhineland
10/18	1A		F?	37N	9E	36?	Oneida	Rhineland
10/21	1A		M	49N	14W	29	Douglas	Superior
11/01	1A		M	49N	11W	22	Douglas	Maple
12/15?	1A		F	40N	12E	13	Forest	Alvin

13 counties

<sup>1</sup>A=Adult; J=Juvenile; U=Unknown



**Figure 4.** *Reported possible and probable moose observations in Wisconsin during 2005.*